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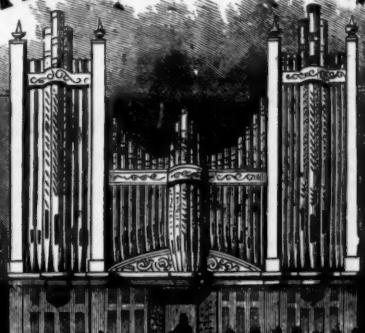
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NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.—MSS. COMPETITION.—The Committee desire to thank Contributors, and to announce that the Anthem, "Let the Righteous be Glad," by Mr. Richard Francis Lloyd, B.Mus. (Lond.), of Liverpool, and the Part-Song, "The West Wind, oh, the West Wind," by Mr. William McKendrick, of Crouch Hill, have been accepted. The Part-Song, "O Summer Day," by "Ajax," is commended. The Judge was Dr. E. H. Turpin. None of the Hymn Tunes were found to be suitable.—T. R. Croger, Hon. Sec.

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By BRUCE STEANE. Price 1½d.

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THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL:

A MONTHLY RECORD AND REVIEW
Devoted to the interests of Worship Music in the
Nonconformist Churches.
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Dut Competitions.

The prize for the best Festival Anthem has been awarded to

Mr. ERNEST H. SMITH, F.R.C.O.,
87, Vandyke Street,
Liverpool.

It will be issued with the January number of the JOURNAL.

Dut Next Competition.

We offer a prize of One Guinea for the best "Amen" suitable to be sung after the Benediction. Something after the style of Stainer's "Sevenfold Amen" is what we require. The conditions are as follows :

1. Compositions must be sent to our office not later than January 1st, 1896.
2. Each composition must be marked with a *nom de plume*, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope, containing the name and address of the composer.
3. The successful composition shall become our copyright on payment of the prize.
4. Unsuccessful compositions will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent us for that purpose.
5. We reserve the right to withhold the prize

should we consider there is no composition of sufficient merit or suitability.

6. Our decision in all matters relating to the competition shall be final.

With this issue we complete our eighth year of existence. Year by year the JOURNAL has increased in circulation, and, we trust, also in influence for good. We are naturally anxious to add to the number of our readers, and thus to reach some new friends. Every Nonconformist choir in the country should see the JOURNAL regularly. If only one copy was procured, it might be passed from one member to another; or selected parts might be read at the choir practices. As we are about to begin a new volume, now is a good time to begin to subscribe. We would ask organists, choirmasters, and all interested in the improvement of Nonconformist worship music, to do us the favour to make the JOURNAL known amongst their friends. If all our present readers would undertake to get at least one new one for 1896, we should be much gratified. With the hope of securing the co-operation of organists we make the following liberal offer. To everyone who sends us ten shillings as the annual subscription of four *new* subscribers (2s. 6d. each), we will send a copy of each of the five numbers of *Modern Organ Music* at present issued, if fourpence-halfpenny is sent to cover postage. For the contents of these numbers we would refer our readers to the advertisement on the back page. It must be distinctly understood that the subscribers are new ones. If they have been accustomed to get the JOURNAL through their bookseller they cannot be considered new subscribers because the subscription is sent direct to us.

We are always glad to send a parcel of specimen copies to anyone who thinks good use can be made of them. Or if any friends will send us names and addresses of probable subscribers, we will post a copy to each of them.

We are glad to announce that we have arranged for a very interesting series of articles relating to Worship Music to appear in the JOURNAL during 1896. They will be written by well known men, and all of them experts on the subjects they will deal with. "How to Accompany a Service," and "How to Accompany an Oratorio," will be undertaken by Mr. Fountain Meen, organist of Union Chapel, Islington; "How to get good Congregational Singing," will be treated by Mr. F. G. Edwards, Organist of St. John's Wood Presbyterian Church; Mr. James W. Lewis, Organist and Choirmaster of Emmanuel Congregational Church, East Dulwich (conductor of the choir which for three consecutive years won the N.C.U. prize at the Crystal Palace), will write on "Good Choir Singing"; Mr. J. P. Attwater, Organist of Grafton Square Congregational Church, Clapham, will have something to say about "Chanting"; Mr. J. R. Griffith, Organist of Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, will give his impressions (after a lengthened experience) of "Liturgical Services"; Mr. Luther

Hinton, the well known conductor of the London Sunday School Choir, will treat of "Sunday School Music"; Mr. H. L. Fulkerson, the Precentor of Regent's Square Presbyterian Church (where there is no organ), will write upon "Unaccompanied Singing." We are in communication with other well known organists, who will contribute articles on other kindred topics. These articles should be of much practical use to all engaged in the worship of the sanctuary.

Mr. Davies, one of the tenor singers in St. Paul's Cathedral Choir, formerly of Magdalen College, Oxford, was engaged by the Oxford Nonconformist Choir Union to sing the tenor solos in *Elijah*. We learn that the matter was brought under the notice of the authorities of St. Paul's by those of Magdalen College, with the result that Mr. Davies was forbidden to keep the engagement! And this in these days when reunion is so much spoken of! Well may Dean Gregory and his friends say, "From hatred and malice and all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us."

The Nonconformist Choir Union, acting under the advice of Dr. E. H. Turpin, has accepted the anthem, "Let the righteous be glad," by Mr. Richard Francis Lloyd, Mus. Bac. (London), of Liverpool, and the part song "The West Wind, Oh! The West Wind," by Mr. William McKendrick, of Crouch Hill, for performance at the Crystal Palace Festival in June next.

In another column we report the Fourth Annual Festival of the Central Gloucestershire Union. We regret to hear that many of the choirs connected with the smaller churches do not join the Union. These are the very people who ought to be members of it, and who would gain the greatest benefit. We hope the ministers and deacons of these churches will try and persuade the singers another year to associate themselves with this excellent movement.

The new Mayor of Winchester is Mr. A. R. Dyer, the Hon. Organist of the Congregational Church. We congratulate our friend upon the enthusiasm with which he was elected to the office.

Passing Notes.

DR. HENRY HILES, of Manchester, is a man who has the courage of his opinions. There are pessimistic people who think, rightly or wrongly, that by the multiplication of music schools you must augment the number of those troublesome aspirants, already far too numerous, who claim to be teachers upon the strength of some certificate they may have earned, and that the fees must be yet further reduced of those who already find it difficult to make the financial belt meet. Dr. Hiles has no such fears. In the first place he believes that there will shortly be a great change in our examination schemes, many of which are at present of a clearly bogus nature

—mere money-making speculations. In the near future each town, each district, will learn to manage its own musical affairs, just as it manages other matters, and the local music school will be established on as sure a foundation as any of the leading institutions of the metropolis. The effect of this departure upon the local teachers Dr. Hiles does not deal with in detail, remarking simply that "only those teachers need have any misgivings who are conscious of insecurity in positions they have no right to occupy." But this is far too optimistic a view of the question. Even as matters stand at present, many thoroughly capable teachers find it difficult to make ends meet; and the multiplication of music schools can only increase their embarrassment. Dr. Hiles, it is true, declares his belief that the ranks of teachers will have ere long to be thinned in a somewhat drastic manner, not only by exclusion of the incompetent, but by strictly limiting the supply of the really qualified. But how is this to be done? No law can ever come into force which will prevent a man becoming a music teacher if he is so inclined; nor can the supply of qualified music teachers be limited by any legislative enactment. By-and-by it may be necessary for some of us, if we are not then too old, to give heed to the original command to go out and "till the earth and subdue it." But that is another matter.

One of the questions which come up for periodical discussion is the question of whether organ and piano practice may be carried on concurrently with benefit in the case of either instrument. So far, at any rate, as regards the organist's practice of the piano, one would have thought that this question had long ago been settled. The better an organist plays the piano the better certainly will be his organ-playing; indeed, it may be laid down as a general rule that unless a man has a fair amount of execution on the piano he will never play the organ at all. There is, besides, a great saving in various ways in doing one's manual practice at the piano, and where pedals can be attached to that instrument there is an immense additional gain. Dr. Peace of Glasgow, gives many of his organ lessons on a Pedalier in his house, and does a very great deal of his own practice on it besides. On the other hand, the study of the organ cannot fail to be of benefit to the pianist, who always seems to lack something when he has no extended acquaintance with the keyboard of an instrument supplied by wind. Many noted pianists have set the example in that way. The late Sir Charles Hallé, for instance, studied the organ with Rinck, and although no one ever thought of connecting him with the instrument, it is a fact that he played Mendelssohn's first organ sonata on one occasion at a public concert. Schumann, it may be remembered, advises his students to "neglect no opportunity of practising on the organ." There is no instrument, he adds, "which inflicts such prompt chastisement on offensive and defective composition or execution." And that is true. A study of the organ will reveal the ugliness of a bad touch undoubtedly; but dignity, certainty, and *cantabile* must inevitably follow its judicious use. "I don't like your chopped music, anyway," says one of Dr. Holmes' characters. There is a good deal of "chopped music"



to be heard from some pianists, but not as a rule from pianists who have studied the organ.

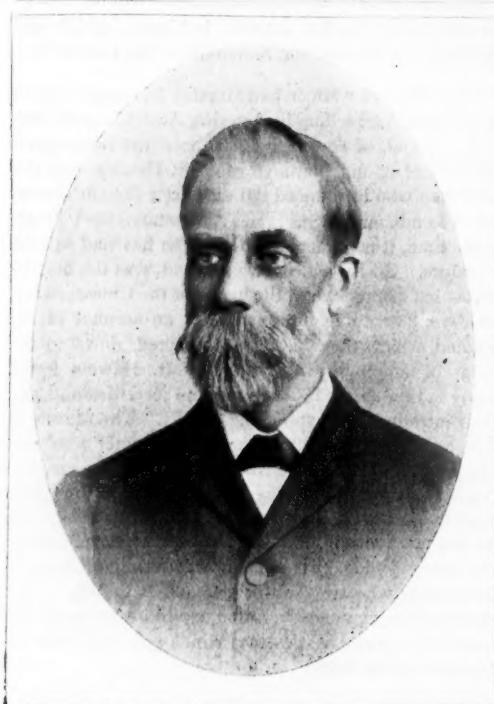
It is a sad comment on the generosity of mankind, as represented by the music publisher, that the world so often hears of the pecuniary straits of composers whose names have been associated with a popular success. The veteran Henry Russell has just been telling us that while he wrote some 800 songs, he made only about £400 by the copyrights, while out of "Cheer! boys, cheer!"—which he sold for a guinea—the music-sellers made their thousands. A peculiarly sad case of the kind has been intermittently brought to the notice of the public for many years back, and only the other day it was revived again. I refer to the case of Mr. F. N. Crouch, the composer of "Kathleen Mavourneen." Mr. Crouch sold the copyright of his famous song for a few pounds when he was quite a young man, and I believe he has never received another penny on account of it, although some thirty separate firms in America alone have published it, and drawn fine fat sums from its sale. In England the copyright, when transferred some years ago, brought no less than £2,500; and of course the sale of the song here has been enormous. Poor Crouch has had a sadly chequered career—a romantic career, indeed, one might say; and now at eighty-six he is not only partially blind but in actual want. Surely something might be done by the many admirers of "Kathleen Mavourneen" to render the few remaining years of the old man's life at least decently comfortable. Mr. Crouch, by the way, regrets that his song should have been so much sung by ladies. It is really masculine, he says: "a man's address to the voice of his heart before leaving her." Vocalists, please note.

A German musical journal has been indulging in a little fun at the expense of Mr. Sims Reeves, "the oldest tenor in England." The writer does not understand why the veteran should still be "farewelling" when he had said his good-byes to the concert public some years ago. In Germany, of course, they tolerate an artist only so long as an artist remains efficient. Here we are much more indulgent; we put up with artistic deterioration merely for the sake of past glories, and hence our singers go on taking farewells, and final farewells, and positively last farewells, many years after they should have gone into retirement and so made way for a younger race. Long after Mario's own countrymen had stuffed their ears against his feeble pipings, London went wild with delight over his appearances there. "I heard him at that time," said Victor Maurel, lately, "and, mon Dieu! what a droll squeak he had." This much-vaunted loyalty of the British public is a capital arrangement for keeping the artist's exchequer in a healthy condition. It has further a comfortable and virtuous sound when John Bull quotes it proudly as a national characteristic; but it has some exceedingly bad effects upon the art, notwithstanding. Meantime, the great British public are probably not concerning themselves very much about Mr. Sims Reeves' vocal capabilities. A veteran of seventy-six, he has married a wife of twenty-one, and thus

created a new kind of interest in himself, which will probably last through the remainder of his farewells.

The author of "Music and Morals" has just returned from a year's travelling in America, Australia, and New Zealand, and, of course, he has been interviewed on the subject of his journeyings. Mr. Haweis was the bold man who introduced the spliced female chorister to Londoners at St. James's, Westmoreland Place. Since then, it need hardly be said, he has had several imitators. St. Luke's, Berwick Street, was the first to follow his example, and the heads of the Church Army, he says, "wrote to me asking for an account of my method, which they have now adopted, down to the point of employing my tailor." Mr. Haweis found many ladies' choirs in Australia and New Zealand, and their introduction is spreading rapidly. The reason of this, he rightly thinks, is owing to the greater economy, efficiency, and reverence which are secured by employing lady singers. "Ladies behave better on the whole than men or boys, they give less trouble, and they can be had more easily. In large towns, especially, there are many young girls with a smattering of musical knowledge who are glad for a small fee to help in the music of the churches." Of course there are; and the sooner the ecclesiastical fad which prevents their use is removed the better.

The number of people who came into personal contact with Mendelssohn becomes gradually smaller. Mr. Henry Russell, to whom I have referred in another paragraph, rode down to Birmingham in the same train with the composer when *Elijah* was to be performed for the first time, but I do not find that he has anything to tell us about the master in his volume of reminiscences just published. It is different with Mr. Beatty-Kingston, whose "Men, Cities, and Events" I have just been dipping into. Mendelssohn, as he appeared to the now veteran journalist, was "a somewhat slightly-built man of middle height, with extremely handsome, regular features, dark hair, curling round a high forehead and the brightest of fair eyes I had ever looked upon—onyx-like in clearness and colour, but gleaming with a live lustre never given out by any precious stone." Mr. Beatty-Kingston, though his life-work has lain in quite another direction, is to this day a very good pianist. When he was a mere youngster he played to Mendelssohn, and this is what the composer said to him at that time: "If you want to make music a source of lifelong happiness, be careful to exercise yourself constantly in playing *a prima vista*. You should make a point of reading something at sight every day; there is plenty of printed music, old and new. To acquire perfect execution a great repertoire would be of the first importance, if you were intended to earn your bread by playing in public; but I hear that is not so, and therefore I advise you to cultivate sight-reading, from which you will derive an enjoyment only to be exceeded by the pleasure of listening to faultless performers of fine musical works." Mr. Beatty-Kingston has some very interesting reminiscences of Liszt, Rubinstein, Patti, and other great gods and goddesses of music, but I must put him on the shelf for the present. J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.



Music at Southgate Congregational Church, Gloucester.

THERE are few places in England richer in historical association than Gloucester. In connection with it are the names of many who played their part, and that right well, in the making of "our rough island story." Men like Bishop Hooper, George Whitfield, Robert Raikes are still realities in the old city, although time carries us farther from their life and thought with every year that rolls. The name of Bishop Hooper reminds us of those who, not only in Gloucester, paid the penalty of their loyalty to conviction. It is recorded that as early as Elizabeth's reign many of the first Independents, or Brownists as they were called, suffered persecution here. In 1660 Rev. James Forbes, a weekly preacher at the Cathedral, was ejected from his office for conscience sake, and thus became an Independent minister. After constant persecution he and his followers in 1699 built their first church, near the East Gate of the city. Three years after the death of Forbes, which occurred in 1712, the Trinitarian section of the community seceded, taking with them as their portion the communion plate and the library of their late pastor; and it is interesting to note that to-day Southgate Church holds in her keeping these connecting links in her past history. For a while they worshipped in what was known as Cobbler's Hall, near the South Gate of the city, and not far from the site of the present building. The original Southgate Chapel, like so many of the old meeting-houses, which were often built in some out-of-the-way corner, lay at a distance from the street. It was built on the site of the Church of

St. Owen, which at the time of the siege of Gloucester, in 1643, stood outside the city walls, but was razed to the ground that it might afford no shelter to the besiegers. This earlier structure was superseded in 1851 by the building now standing on the same spot.

Thus in briefest outline are traced the main points in its history.

From an architectural point of view its appearance is by no means unworthy of notice, while its position, fronting the main Southgate Street, gives it a deserving prominence. The pointed roof, the handsome Gothic porch and window, in fact the whole of the exterior, remind us that we have outlived the days when Nonconformists thought it a sin to make beautiful their places of worship. But to come now within the more legitimate range of this article, namely, the part that music plays in the services, the organ and organist have the first claim. The two-manual instrument, built in 1878, though not a large or elaborate one, is of sweet tone, and powerful enough to meet present requirements. It contains nine stops on the Great, eleven on the Swell, and three on the pedals, with the necessary couplers. It stands in the corner on the left hand of the minister; while the choir occupies the whole of the slightly raised space within the communion rail, immediately beneath the pulpit.

Whatever degree of efficiency has been attained in the musical way at Southgate is due solely to Mr. Franklin Higgs, whose portrait heads this article, and who for the long period of thirty-two years has gratuitously filled the dual position of choirmaster and organist. It is not often that such faithful service is coupled with the energy and ability which Mr. Higgs has always shown. The principle of being thorough characterises all that he undertakes. This is constantly evident from the manner in which not only his musical duties are performed, but also those which his office as deacon of the church entails. His name, too, is well known to all musical folk in Gloucester; and he often acts as deputy conductor of the Choral Society. This Society owes its existence to Mr. Higgs' father, who back in the "forties" gathered together a body of singers with the object of making vocal music more popular. To quote an early entry in its minute book: "The object of the Choral Society shall be the cultivation and practice of vocal music, with a view to the improvement of congregational singing in public worship, and also to supply its members with a social and healthful means of recreation of a moral and intellectual character." Besides being conductor, the management of the society was practically in his hands, and there were also hundreds who through his teaching learnt to read music by John Hullah's method of the "fixed Doh." His enthusiasm and musical resource are worthily reflected in his son, whose excellent taste as an accompanist, either on organ or pianoforte, in anthem or solo, proves him the right man in the right place. But it is as choirmaster that he deserves special mention.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature to a stranger in the singing at Southgate is the excellence of the chanting. The pointing of the chants

in the Congregational Hymnal—which is the book used here in its entirety—is on the whole good, but it is supplemented by careful and intelligent practice; and most of the short hour at the weekly practice is often devoted to this purpose. Great care is taken to avoid gabbling or unsteadiness in the words that fall on the reciting note—a fault which spoils the chanting of so many church and even cathedral choirs. This is of course the great difficulty where there is a number of voices, and one which only constant attention and rehearsal can overcome. In a long passage greater steadiness is secured by the organist making a moment's break where a comma or other point occurs, instead of keeping the chord down throughout. This plan Mr. Higgs has successfully adopted, directly any sign of "wobbling" becomes apparent. In like manner a staccato rather than a legato style of playing, discriminately used, often keeps up the time in hymn or anthem when the voices drag, or vice versa. The accenting of wrong syllables in words is another common error that Mr. Higgs takes pains to remedy; the temptation, for instance, to sing *also* and *un/o* occurs repeatedly in the Hymnal. A good effect is produced by varying the rate of movement in certain verses of a chant where it is suggested by the character of the words.

The choir also has learnt some degree of confidence, so that the organist, where and when he sees fit, may leave the singing entirely in its own hands. The last time Sullivan's "O Love the Lord" was sung, the passage for basses only, "Be strong, and He shall establish," was taken by the voices alone with a very satisfactory result. Such beautiful bits of harmony as "Teach me Thy way," and "Lord, for Thy tender mercies' sake," are started with pianissimo organ, but their beauty is greatly enhanced when the choir can be trusted to finish them without accompaniment. Although there are many old favourites amongst the anthems, such as, "I will lift up mine eyes," "Radiant morn," "Cantate Domine," they are not allowed to become stale by too frequent recurrence, so that, though familiar, a welcome freshness always accompanies their rendering. Neither are they allowed to go unpractised.

By dint of constant pleading—and, it must be owned, a little wholesome and not altogether undeserved bullying—Mr. Higgs has succeeded in obtaining a more intelligent singing of the hymns by the choir. This is being slowly recognised and taken up by the congregation. In many a church of the Establishment, aye, and cathedral too—our own being a lamentable example—this part of the worship is simply spoilt, and often absurdly so, by the mechanical and senseless plan of chopping up the verses into lines, regardless of their meaning or connection one with another. There are lessons that Nonconformists may well learn from their brethren in the Established Church, but in this respect the latter might with advantage take a leaf from the notebook of more than one "Dissenting" congregation. There is the danger, however, at Southgate, and that a common one, where there is a good choir, of the congregation growing lax and

failing to make use of the opportunities afforded them of joining in the singing. A warm-hearted and zealous Methodist, who was evidently used to a very different state of things, remarked, after attending a service here, "Well, you are the laziest lot of Christians I ever came across in my life!" Although his criticism was a trifle severe, it was not altogether unmerited. The congregation generally seems to be unaware of, or to ignore, the fact that, in the hymns at any rate, the function of the choir is simply to lead.

The size of the choir is small compared with many that are reviewed in these columns. Out of a total of about twenty-five, there is an average attendance of from sixteen to twenty on the Sunday. "Little and good" is the motto adopted; though, all things considered, the statement sounds very like making a virtue of necessity. For one thing, the space allotted to the choir would be inconveniently crowded if the latter were numerically increased. Also the frequent changes through the removal of members from the city renders the task of keeping up the numbers and the balance of the parts—especially the tenor and bass—extremely difficult.

It is but small consolation, at best, to learn that Southgate does not stand alone in the difficulty it experiences in keeping up the interest of the weekly practice. Whether it is "pressure of business," "domestic duties," indifference, or a genuine inability to attend, one thing is painfully apparent, namely, that those who stay away the oftener are generally the very ones who stand most in need of practice. It is no valid excuse to stay away because the music is known. To ensure good singing there must be regular practice all together. A choir of ordinary capability, adhering strictly to this plan, will gain better results than a number of singers whose individual merits may be vocally far superior, who are gathered together without combined practice. There seems to be a lack of *esprit de corps* now-a-days in many of our Nonconformist choirs—a letting slip our hold of the great principles of cohesion and unity which, in singing as in everything else, are so essential to success.

The "services" (inappropriate word! though necessarily used for want of a better) are at Southgate in the main bright and cheery. The hymns requiring vigorous treatment are sung with spirit; and though the subdued and solemn find their due place, the singing is rarely dull. The following order is generally, though not strictly observed:—

Hymn, prayer, chant, reading, children's hymn with occasional address (morning only), reading, anthem, prayer, hymn, sermon, hymn, benediction.

It may be noted before concluding that as the majority of the accounts written for this column are given from an outsider's point of view, it may not be inappropriate that sometimes, as in the present instance, it be regarded from another standpoint; and what is lost by the absence of one in the capacity of "critic-fly," may perhaps be compensated by a few hints from an appreciative choir-member behind the scenes.

The church and the various institutions connected therewith are at present suffering the incon-

venience of being without a pastor. Along with the rest, the choir comes in for its share; for seldom are the hymns to hand in time for practice in the week. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and this period of interregnum has been the means of promoting and strengthening the bonds of good fellowship between member and member. We pray that the Hand that faileth never will direct the choice, and with a new minister a new era of still greater and more useful service may dawn upon the life of Southgate Church.

A Holiday Episode.

It happened to me, during the past summer, to be placed in circumstances where I had to blush for a compatriot, and understood in some measure why the Irish regard us as unmannerly and detestable aliens. Staying with friends in the north of Ireland, I made one day one of a small party that walked from the town some seven miles into the country, partly for the pleasure of the exercise, partly with a more practical object. The youngest member of the party was to play the organ on the following Sunday at the little parish church of the village for which we were bound. He had already made acquaintance with the organ, at a choir practice held a few days before our expedition, and had regaled us on his return with a vivid description of the curious instrument itself, of the jolly parson who had charge of the parish, of the remarkable agglomeration of individuals by courtesy termed a choir, and of the original principles upon which the musical arrangements were devised. It appeared that the parson was accustomed to officiate as choirmaster, and that his choice of tunes and chants was regulated by the "lie" of the tenor part: if that embraced more than five notes, of which the highest was E flat, the tune was an impossible one. This and other interesting particulars somewhat raised our curiosity, and it was with the object of seeing at least the organ that we walked over on that fine August morning.

In due time we arrived at the village, and made our way towards the church. The sexton's house, a small whitewashed cottage of severe aspect, stood just opposite the gate of the churchyard. We called to ask if the church and the organ were open, and learning from the sexton's wife (the sexton not being at home) that such was the case, we passed through the gate and proceeded to the church, which stood some hundred yards from the road. The church, as the parson was wont to deplore, had been "restored," and from the real and harmonious specimen of Early English it had once been was now transformed by incongruous additions into an example of no known order of architecture, and an eyesore to all who had an idea of form and comeliness.

The door was open; we entered, and spying the organ at the end remote from the chancel, we approached it, and viewed its exterior as a preliminary to an investigation of its genius and quality. It was a veritable box of whistles. A little larger than an old fashioned barrel-organ, its pipes rose in all the glory of gilded speechlessness above a row of faded

keys, terminated at each end by a prominent square-angled jamb which effectually interposed between the hand of the player and the stops. These were set in a deep and shadowy recess on the other side of the jamb, round which the player must necessarily squint if he wished to see them; having squinted, he might possibly see the knobs, but the passage of many fingers across their surface had worn away all trace of the names that once they bore. There were so few of them that this was in no way inconvenient. Below the key board were some eight pedals, of the thickness of an average little finger. From one side of the organ, in full view of the congregation, projected the two-foot handle of the blower, who was accorded perhaps a square foot of elbow-room between the case and a wooden barrier which enclosed the organ.

Having taken in, in less time than the narration of them needs, these details of the outer aspect of the organ, we were proceeding to lift the lid of the key board for our more detailed examination, when our hands were arrested by the tones of a harsh and untuneable voice. "You don't touch that there horgan!" it said. Without stopping to reflect on the incongruity of that voice and those cockneyisms with a restored church in the north of Ireland, we hastened to view the speaker. We saw a short, rugged, wiry figure, dressed (as to the lower quarters) in the roughest of corduroys, and (as to the upper) in nothing but a grey linsey shirt, the sleeves of which were turned up to the elbow, revealing forearms remarkable more for sinew than sinuousness, and adorned by the permanent etchings of the tattoo. In one hand this figure held the blade of a scythe, in the other a hone with which, as we contemplated him, he resumed the sharpening motions that our intrusion had interrupted. "You don't touch that there horgan!" he said again, and we looked to see what lips could give passage to such an utterance in the north of Ireland. We saw a small round head, surmounted by a thin crop of hair like the stubble of a cornfield. The face was sallow and cadaverous, the skin tight-drawn save where in the cheeks deep furrows marked the situation of childhood's dimples. To nothing can I compare the physiognomy so fitly as to the British museum bust of Julius Caesar, only this living head was a debased and degenerated copy. For the rest, a two-days' growth of gray bristle lent horrid shadow to its contours, and his eyes gleamed with the sinister and baleful light of a jail-bird.

We looked at him but for a moment, then, somewhat nonchalantly, I as the *doyen* of the party told him quietly that the youngest of us was to play on the following Sunday, and had come over for a little practice. "Don't you touch that horgan," he reiterated. "My horders is to allow no one in this 'ere church not to touch this 'ere horgan, without special permission, and I won't allow it."

"Who are you?" I asked, with perhaps an insinuation that the answer was of no great importance.

"Hi'm, sexton and grave-digger, that's who I ham, and you don't touch that horgan without leave."

I pointed out that the rector lived some two miles away, that in all likelihood he would not be at home

even if we were to seek him, and that it was somewhat unreasonable to expect us to waste an hour in obtaining express permission from one who, under the circumstances, had an undoubted right to practise (that is how I put it!) the organ. I concluded by saying that I would take the responsibility with the rector, and give the man my card. But the fellow was obdurate. "Don't you come the hold sojer over me," he said. "Without written or verbal permission, my borders is to allow no one to touch that horgan, and I ain't going to let you touch it. So 'ook it!"

Up to this point I had spoken to the man in the coolest and most persuasive tones of which I was capable. But endurance has its limits, and at this impertinence I told the fellow in good set terms that he was an impudent blackguard, whom I would report to the rector, and who would find that he had made a great mistake. Without more ado I lifted the lid of the "horgan," and proceeded to manipulate the bellows handle. Throwing down his scythe, the sexton came towards me with doubled fists and glaring eyes. "Yer will, will yer!" he cried. "Then we'll try what a little boxing will do. Get hout of this 'ere church, or I'll chuck you out. Don't touch that horgan (as I still worked the handle)—don't touch it, I say. I'll 'ave you locked up for trespass; you'll see the inside of a jail in ten minutes. By ——, I'll do for you!" But finding that bluster and clenched fists were not successful, and, I suppose, reflecting that one man, even though a wiry sexton and gravedigger, woudl prove no match for three young men and a lady, he suddenly seized his hat and keys, and flung out of the church, crying that he would lock us in and go for the constable.

After his exit, some minutes were passed in subsiding from the white heat into which the fellow's insolence had put me, and in wiping away the tears of the lady member of our party, who had every moment expected that my head would fall to the sharpened scythe. Then we satisfied ourselves as to the qualities of the organ, and began to wonder whether we were really locked in. The door, as we expected, was not locked, so we left the church, and walked quietly up the road. As we passed the sexton's house, the man came out, and, in a more respectful tone (his wife had probably been talking to him!) asked me to be so kind as to give him my name and address. I replied that as he had insolently refused to accept it before, he could only have it now by following me to the rector's, where I was going at once to report him for his disgraceful conduct. Turning our backs on him, we continued on our way, followed for some distance by the opprobrious epithets which the sexton hurled after us.

The rector was not at home. But the same evening I wrote to him an account of the matter, and in due course received his answer. He apologised in the name of the Church of Ireland for the courtesy and violence of the man's behaviour, and offered as an excuse the fact that the man was a stranger and an Englishman. He was an old coastguardsman, who had already been summoned before the vestry to answer for misconduct, and had been allowed a month in which to effect a self-reformation. His assertion as to his express orders to keep the church and organ sacred

from intruders was nonsense, for though he had general charge of the church and graveyard, he had no special orders whatever. (He might have added that none were necessary, for neither church nor organ was at all likely to attract visitors.) And in conclusion, said the rector, the man had proved himself so unfit for his duties that he was quite at liberty to dig his own grave.

I blushed for England. I understood how the polite and genial Irish must hate Englishmen if they regard the cockney coastguard as a model of the race.

CENTRAL GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL CHOIR UNION.

THE fourth annual choral festival of this Union took place on the 13th ult., at Highbury Congregational Church, Cheltenham, when what may be fairly called an ideal Nonconformist service, bright, refined, and thoroughly devotional in character, was held. Upwards of 200 members of the choirs of the various Nonconformist churches in the district took part in the musical service, which went remarkably well, although the united choirs had only been able to have one rehearsal. The anthem "Jubilate Deo" (Garrett in F), was very well rendered, as were also the responses to the Beatitudes, the theme of which was taken from a phrase in the *Elijah*. Mr. John Jacob, of Stroud, conducted, and Mr. A. G. Bloodworth acted as organist. The Rev. A. C. Turberville preached a very eloquent sermon from the text, "A new song."

After the service an organ recital, necessarily somewhat curtailed, was given by Mr. A. G. Bloodworth, and was varied by vocal selections by the choir. Guilmant's "Nuptial March" and Frost's variations on "Rock of Ages" were perhaps the most popular items, while in the concluding solo, Batiste's "Grand Offertoire in D," the capabilities of the great organ were well displayed, especially in the massive chords at the close. H. H. Woodward's beautiful anthem, "The radiant morn hath passed away" was the most noteworthy of the vocal items. At the conclusion of the recital a collection was made in aid of the expenses of the Union.

IPSWICH NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.

THE Ipswich Nonconformist Choir Union recently held its usual annual concert, when a varied and interesting programme was submitted to a good audience. The Union has now been in existence several years, and has been attended with considerable success. These results have been due in no small degree to the untiring energy and patience of the conductor, Mr. J. Hayward, and to the efforts of Mr. J. P. Gill in the office of secretary.

The programme opened with a march by the band. Spohr's cantata, "God, Thou are great," followed, and the opening chorus was very well sung by the choir, articulation, perhaps, being hardly clear enough in some passages. The solo, "Thou earth, waft sweet incense," was sweetly rendered by Miss E. Hayward, who was warmly applauded; and a similar reception awaited her in the duet, "Children, pray this love to cherish," with Mr. A. Orriss. The double quartette, "Walk ye, hundred thousands," by the Misses L. Dowsett, S. Wightman, E. Phillips, and Downing, and Messrs. S. Barnes, Vince, W. Talman, and Calver, seemed to lack power. Perhaps the concluding chorus by the choir was the best portion of the cantata, for it went with precision, the concluding passage being very creditable. Mrs. Vince's "The mighty river" met with a warm acknowledgment. Miss L.

Dowsett's singing of "The Promise of Life" was certainly one of the best items in the first part of the programme, although evident nervousness prevented her powers from being heard to full advantage. Mendelssohn's "O, come, let us worship," given by Mr. Orriss, with the chorus by the choir, was received with applause, both Mr. Orriss and the choir acquitting themselves so well that an encore was demanded. The band opened the second part by rendering the Farewell Symphony, given in the customary manner. Mr. Orriss next gave Piccolomini's "Whisper, and I shall hear," and was encored. The choir rendered the part song, "Two Cupids" with considerable success, and Miss D. L. Spooner, who followed next with "Love lies asleep in the rose," was accorded a spontaneous encore. The Misses E. and M. Hayward and Messrs. Orriss and Hayward achieved a success in "I see them on their winding way," and Mr. P. Hooper's violin solo, Van Biene's "Broken Melody," was excellently executed and loudly acknowledged. Miss S. Wightman's unaffected singing of Cowen's "Psalm of Life" was demanded. Miss L. Nash was recalled for "The Enchantress." After a quartette for men's voices, "The Little Church," by Messrs. Orriss, Barnes, Calver, and Gill, the part song, "Spring," by the choir successfully closed an interesting and enjoyable evening. Mr. T. C. Nash accompanied with skill.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

CANONBURY.—A musical service on behalf of the Choir Fund took place at Harecourt Chapel on November 10th. An admirable discourse on the use of music in the sanctuary was delivered by the Rev. A. Rowlands, LL.B., B.A., of Crouch End. In the course of the sermon, he said that he could imagine an old Puritan walking up the chapel, booted and spurred, with a well-born Bible under his arm. He would strongly object to the music which he would hear, but, added the preacher, "he would also object to the cushioned seats and the furnaces that diffuse a comfortable warmth through the building." . . . "I do not know that we should allow the Puritans of two hundred years ago to tell us what we should and what we should not do at the end of the nineteenth century." At the close of a very hearty service, nine numbers from Mendelssohn's "Athalia" were sung by a chorus of forty voices, the solos being taken by Miss Minnie Philips, Mrs. Merson, Miss Gertrude Mote and Mrs. Bradshaw C. McKay. Mr. E. Drewett, A.R.C.O., presided at the organ.

FULHAM.—The choir of Dawes Road Congregational Church held their annual meeting on the 6th ult., when a large congregation assembled. The annual report, showing that the choir is doing excellent work, was read by the Hon. Sec., Mr. Turney. The sacred portion of the last Crystal Palace Festival was rendered in a very creditable manner, the organist, Mr. Archer, conducting. Mr. Minshall presided, and gave a short address on Congregational and Choir Singing. The esteemed pastor, Rev. H. J. Shirley, also addressed the meeting.

GOSPEL OAK.—The Cantata Choir connected with the Sunday School Union, under Mr. W. Binns, gave a performance of C. Darnton's Cantata, *Spring-time and Harvest*, at Gospel Oak on Oct. 27th. A contingent of the Sunday School Orchestra played the accom-

paniments—the band and chorus numbering nearly too performers. The solo parts were well rendered by Miss Rose Knapp, Miss Catmur, Mr. H. Angel, and Mr. H. L. Haycraft. Mr. Caledfryn Williams did good service at the organ. The Cantata, which was well received, was preceded by a short selection, including "The Heavens are telling," a solo by Miss Knapp, organ solos by Miss Annie Cox, and band selections conducted by Mr. David M. Davis.

HOLLOWAY.—On 7th ult., at Junction Road Congregational Church, the Cantata Choir and a contingent of the orchestra of the Sunday School Union gave an excellent sacred concert. The chief item in the programme was C. Darnton's attractive cantata, "Spring-Time and Harvest." The cantata consists of twelve numbers, comprising choruses, solos, quartettes, and orchestral moreaux descriptive of growth and fruition, and adorative of the Eternal Goodness. We may specially mention the rendering of the choral portions of No. 5, "Thou visitest the earth," and No. 11, "O that men." Miss Rose Knapp sang the charming air No. 8, "Fountain of mercy," with great delicacy and tenderness. The contralto solos were sung by Miss Catmur, and the quartettes by these ladies and Messrs. H. Angel and H. L. Haycraft. The programme included also three orchestral selections, which were creditably given; we think, however, that the effects would have been much more pleasing if greater attention had been given to tune and balance; the choruses, "The heavens are telling" (Creation) and "Hallelujah" (Messiah), the pathetic song "Daddy," sung by Miss Rose Knapp very sympathetically and tenderly, and ably accompanied on the organ by Mr. H. Caledfryn Williams; and three organ solos by Miss Annie Cox, viz., "Andante" (H. Smart), "Hymn of Nuns" (Wely), and "Procession March" (Scotsot Clark). Miss Cox is a brilliant and finished organist; she thoroughly delighted the audience, and deservedly won the only encore of the evening. The conductor was Mr. W. Binns; conductor of the band, Mr. David M. Davis; and organist, Mr. H. Caledfryn Williams, who played throughout with consummate taste and feeling, rendering an indispensable support to the chorus, as well as enriching the orchestral portions of the works.

KENSINGTON.—An organ recital was given on Tuesday, the 5th ult., in Trinity Presbyterian Church, by Mr. Alfred G. Woodham, the organist of the church. His programme was made up of selections from the works of Mendelssohn, Widor, Guilmant, Bach, and Salomé.

KENTISH TOWN.—On Sunday, the 10th ult., special services were held at the Congregational Church in connection with the Rev. D. W. Vaughan's first anniversary. In the evening Miss Nellie Starr contributed "The Good Shepherd" (Odoari Barri), and Messrs. Maxwell and Bowen the duet, "Now are we Ambassadors" (*St. Paul*), followed by the chorus, "How Lovely are the Messengers," from the same work. The afternoon service was of special interest. The following items were included:—"There is a Green Hill Far Away" (Gounod), by Miss Edith Hands, who also contributed "Entreat me not to leave Thee" (Gounod); "Hear My Prayer" (Mendelssohn) with Miss Mary Fuchs as soloist; Mr. Maldwyn Humphreys the tenor solo in the chorus, "O Come let us Worship" (Mendelssohn's "95th Psalm"), also in the duet with Miss Hands "Children, pray this love to Cherish" (Spohr's "God, Thou art Great"); the duet and chorus "I waited for the Lord" (Hymn of Praise), Miss Fuchs and Miss Starr. The solo work was ably sustained by the foregoing artistes, and the chorus work very creditably performed by the choir, under the baton of Mr. G. H. Lawrence. Mr. Ernest W. E. Blandford presided at the organ.

STOKE NEWINGTON.—A very successful bazaar was recently held in connection with Rectory Road Congregational Church, when £890 was raised towards the debt on the building. The choir stall was in charge of Mrs. Kloss and Mrs. Stroud.

PROVINCIAL.

BESSES, near MANCHESTER.—The anniversary services of the Congregational church were held on Sunday the 10th ult. Special hymns, etc., were sung during the day, and the choir, under the direction of Mr. Leaver, the organist and choirmaster, gave the following selections of music:—Morning: Introit, "This is the day" (Sir John Goss); anthem, "I came not to call the righteous" (Dr. Vincent); offertoriums, "Let your light so shine" and "Lay not up for yourselves" (Dr. Martin); three-fold "Amen" (unaccompanied) (Dr. Naylor). Evening: Introit, "Sanctus" in G (Thomas Attwood); anthem, "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacles?" (Dr. Roberts); general thanksgiving (Dr. Naylor); seven-fold "Amen" (unaccompanied) (Sir John Stainer). The music at the afternoon service was sustained by the scholars, who sang as an introit the anthem, "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks" (by Vincent Novello). The service closed with the vesper, "Lord, keep us safe" (J. Stribling).

BROMLEY.—A Musical Association—which is practically a union of the Nonconformist choirs of the town—has been founded. A committee, comprising representatives from all the choirs, has been appointed, and Messrs. F. S. Oram and W. H. Sharland are the musical directors. The idea is to have several concerts, social evenings, and musical lectures during the winter. The first social evening was held in the Congregational school-room, on the 1st ult., and was largely attended. The room was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and a very interesting programme of music was arranged. The President of the Association, the Rev. T. Nicholson, and Mr. Oram spoke during the proceedings. There is ample scope for this new Institution in the town, and we wish it much prosperity.

BURTON-ON-TRENT.—On Friday, the 8th ult., a very successful performance of "The Last Judgment" and "The Hymn of Praise" was given in the Town Hall by George Street Methodist Free Church Choir, under the able direction of Mr. T. E. Lowe. The choruses were rendered with much spirit.

HARPENDEN.—Harvest festival services were recently held at the Congregational Church. The special music included the "Te Deum," "Magnificat," "Simper" in F, Stainer's anthem, "What are these," and the Rothampsted jubilee anthem, "All Thy works," composed by Mr. C. B. Kaye, organist of the parish church. The beautiful alto solo, "He maketh peace in thy borders," was sung by Miss R. Longland with all due effect. The other solo voices were Miss Anscombe, Miss Lines, Mr. W. H. Anscombe, Mr. Bedell, and Mr. Valentine. Rev. W. R. Price conducted both services, and preached appropriate sermons.

HIGHTOWN.—An organ recital was given in the Wesleyan Chapel after the evening service on the 10th ult. by Mr. J. W. Burnley, Mr. R. J. Bowling being the vocalist.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.—The new organ erected in the Wesleyan Church by Messrs. Norman Brothers and Beard was opened by Mr. Hoyte, who gave a recital, Miss Gertrude Izard being the vocalist. Special musical services were held on Oct. 27th, when Mr. Basil H. Philpott presided at the organ; Miss McFarlane, Miss Marion V. E. Perrott and Mr. S. Masters sang solos.

OUTLANE, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD.—On Sunday November 11th the Foreign Missionary services were held in the Wesleyan Chapel, when sermons were preached morning and evening by Rev. C. Buzzza, of Lindley. In the afternoon a Service of Song entitled "The Dark Night" (founded on one of Mr. John Ashworth's Strange Tales) was rendered by the choir, the solo parts being admirably rendered by Mrs. Gee, Mrs. Hoyle, Mrs. Wilkinson, and Miss Pilling. In the evening the anthem was the chorus, "The Lord gave the Word"; solo, "How beautiful are the Feet"; chorus, "Their sound is gone Out" (Handel), the solo being beautifully rendered by Mrs. Gee. Mr. John W. Batley, the organist of the chapel, presided at the organ.

Reviews.

First Steps in Harmony. By Ralph Dunstan, Mus. Doc. J. Curwen and Sons. 2s.—This little work, which was written originally for use of the Harmony Classes at the Battersea Polytechnic Institute, can be warmly commended for the use of beginners. It is clear and concise. The summary at the end of each chapter is truly *multum in parvo*.

Handel's Choruses, arranged for the Organ. By Dr. G. C. Martin. Novello and Co.—Thirty-three numbers are issued. The arrangements are good and effective, and they are free from complications which distinguish some similar publications. Organists needing such voluntaries as these will find Dr. Martin's work most useful.

Original Compositions for the Organ. Three of the latest numbers are devoted to a Sonata in D minor by Mr. John E. West, a masterly composition that will repay careful study.

The Brass Band at a Glance. By E. A. Lodge, Lion Arcade, Huddersfield. 1s.—Writers for brass bands will find this chart of great value. It gives the compass, weak notes, open notes, and other practical information, of all the instruments.

The Holy Child. By Thomas Adams. Novello and Co. 1s.—This Christmas Cantata is written for Soprano, Tenor, and Bass soloists and chorus. It is melodious and altogether pleasing, and will be found admirably adapted for a short musical service.

Correspondence.

KEY COLOUR.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—In one of your "Passing Notes" (this month's issue, page 168), you refer to the question of Key Colour. Some lengthy discussions took place in various musical papers between 1882 and 1886 on this subject, and if those of your readers who may consider the matter interesting will refer to the *Musical Times* for November, 1886, at pages 651 and 710, they will find two admirable letters from Franz Groenings dealing with it at some length, and in a sensible way.

To summarise these two long letters is impossible here—even to indicate fairly their general line would need more space than I could ask—but the following meagre and rambling hints of their contents may lead to their perusal by some of your readers:—

From an abstract point of view there is and can be no such thing as Key Colour; looked at vocally there are of course expressions due to pitch which, for example, make it absurd (because unnatural) to "entrust a piping male alto with the part of Hamlet's

ghost, or a Russian basso profundo with the *role* of a Romeo"; but the fact that the pitch in use has altered greatly during the last century or two does not, so far as known, affect the suitability of ancient music for its desired purpose or effect.

Relatively, key colour does exist, but it depends not on pitch but on the methods of production and different ways of manipulating different classes of instruments. Stringed instruments, such as violins, with four open strings, have, in one form, just as pianofortes have, in a different form, to undergo the operations of ordinary hands of one thumb and four fingers each. These hands do not seem to have been mainly designed for pianoforte-playing, or probably our fingers would have been more nearly alike in respect to length, strength, and other qualities. And not the hands only, but also the keyboard, with its white keys and black keys balanced at different distances from the hand, involve inequalities in leverage and in tone which only immense study and practice can overcome even to a moderate extent, and a little consideration will show anyone that when playing in certain keys these difficulties are greatly increased. In Schumann's "Charakteristik der Tonarten," he says, "Play, for instance, the Sehnsuchtswaltzer in A, or the Jungfernchor in B, the new key will go against the grain." The former in A flat has tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant (exclusively employed in the bass of the second part of the Trio), are black keys with short leverage, but if played in A, the building has of course a totally different framework! The "key colour" is totally different, but that difference is in no sense due to pitch, but to the kind of machinery employed in the pianoforte, and its greater or less suitability for the human hand.

I have already trespassed unduly on your space.
Yours, etc.,

J. M. HUTCHESON.

Greenock, Nov. 8th, 1895.

To Correspondents.

A NONCONFORMIST ORGANIST.—Crowded out. Your remarks are rather sweeping and hardly charitable. The large congregation—especially in so short a time from the foundation of the church—abundantly proves that the service is appreciated. We certainly found nothing incompatible with Nonconformist principles, but on the contrary, very much to help and stimulate worship.

J. L. L.—There are local Unions at Liverpool, Oldham, Coventry, Burton-on-Trent, Bournemouth, Wallasey, Stockport, Kettering, Ipswich, Nottingham, Petersfield, Leamington, and other places. The address of the Hon. Sec. of the London Union is Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, E.C. We are unable to give you the information you ask as to the others.

A. T. J.—It is in No. 6 of the *Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries*.

The following are thanked for their communications: J. S. (Stockport); F. F. (Whitby); W. S. D. (Eggbaston); W. W. A. (Bala); R. H. (Dulwich); J. F. C. (Leeds); R. C. M. (Ealing); W. T. (Wolverhampton); P. B. (Chatham); D. E. N. (Cromer).

Staccato Notes.

A SOUTH WALES Festival under the conductorship of Sir Joseph Barnby is to be held next summer.

The well-known harpist, Carl August Oberthür,

died suddenly on the 8th ult. while engaged at a private concert.

MR. A. BRODSKY, principal first violin in the Halévy Orchestra, has been appointed head of the Manchester School of Music.

SIR JOHN STAINER is going to winter in Egypt.

DR. J. F. BRIDGE has been presented with a Doctor of Music's robes by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

THE nett profit of the Leeds Festival was £2,015 4s. 1d.

SURELY the rumour that Mr. Edward Lloyd will shortly retire cannot be true.

A SPLENDID performance of Dr. C. H. H. Parry's "Invocation to Music" (first time in London) was given by the Royal Albert Choral Society on the 21st ult. Madame Albani and Messrs. Ben Davies and A. Black were the soloists. Parts I. and II. of the *Creation* formed the remainder of the programme.

THE Purcell Bi-Centenary Service at Westminster Abbey was a great success.

Accidentals.

"No," said Fogg, "it's no use for me to go to concerts. I went once, and liked it well enough too; but, great guns! when I took up next morning's paper I was flabbergasted. It told of rambles in bosky dells, slumberous musings over the dimpled waters of the gurgling brook, the soothings of summer breezes, the roar and rush of the winter's storm, the merry singing of birds, the frolickings of lambs, the daisy-piled fields, the lovers' soft glances, and—in fact, half a hundred other things that I didn't see or hear when that fellow was fiddling at the concert. It made me so ashamed of myself that all these things were going on right in front of me, and I don't know it, that I just made up my mind that concerts weren't in my line."

THE following is told of a stage-struck youth. He was studying the part of Hamlet for an amateur performance; and, as is usual in such cases, everything he said savoured somewhat of the morose Dane. It happened that one morning, during his walks abroad, he came across an excavation, with two or three men digging below; and with the "gravediggers' scene" in his mind's eye, demanded in tragic tones:—

"Whose grave's this, sir?" and paused for reply; but none came. Again he demanded, "Whose grave's this, sir?" But this time a voice that appeared to proceed from the bowels of the earth replied—

"Get out, yer born idiot; we're on'y layin' a gas-pipe!"

AGED HAMLET.—"Yes, sir, I had the proud distinction of playing before Queen Victoria"—

Voice (*from next room*).—"Oh, the beautiful fibber!"

Hamlet.—"Was married."

Voice (*apologetically*).—"Excuse me."

"HEAR those musicians playing 'My Grandfather's Clock,'" said Dora, at the window.

"I'd like to know," growled David, "how you can tell they are playing 'My Grandfather's Clock.'"

"They keep such wretched time," explained Dora.

"SHALL I sing something, Mr. Van Braam?" asked Miss Screech, as she swung around on the piano-stool. "Perhaps you had better not," replied the young man; "I read in a newspaper that ear-piercing was no longer stylish."



DEC. 1895.]

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ghost, or a Russian basso profundo with the *role* of a Romeo"; but the fact that the pitch in use has altered greatly during the last century or two does not, so far as known, affect the suitability of ancient music for its desired purpose or effect.

Relatively, key colour does exist, but it depends not on pitch but on the methods of production and different ways of manipulating different classes of instruments. Stringed instruments, such as violins, with four open strings, have, in one form, just as pianofortes have, in a different form, to undergo the operations of ordinary hands of one thumb and four fingers each. These hands do not seem to have been mainly designed for pianoforte-playing, or probably our fingers would have been more nearly alike in respect to length, strength, and other qualities. And not the hands only, but also the keyboard, with its white keys and black keys balanced at different distances from the hand, involve inequalities in leverage and in tone which only immense study and practice can overcome even to a moderate extent, and a little consideration will show anyone that when playing in certain keys these difficulties are greatly increased. In Schumann's "Charakteristik der Tonarten," he says, "Play, for instance, the Sehnsuchtswaltzer in A, or the Jungfernchor in B, the new key will go against the grain." The former in A flat has tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant (exclusively employed in the bass of the second part of the Trio), are black keys with short leverage, but if played in A, the building has of course a totally different framework! The "key colour" is totally different, but that difference is in no sense due to pitch, but to the kind of machinery employed in the pianoforte, and its greater or less suitability for the human hand.

I have already trespassed unduly on your space.

Yours, etc.,

J. M. HUTCHESON.

Greenock, Nov. 8th, 1895.

To Correspondents.

A NONCONFORMIST ORGANIST.—Crowded out. Your remarks are rather sweeping and hardly charitable. The large congregation—especially in so short a time from the foundation of the church—abundantly proves that the service is appreciated. We certainly found nothing incompatible with Nonconformist principles, but on the contrary, very much to help and stimulate worship.

J. L. L.—There are local Unions at Liverpool, Oldham, Coventry, Burton-on-Trent, Bournemouth, Walsall, Stockport, Kettering, Ipswich, Nottingham, Petersfield, Leamington, and other places. The address of the Hon. Sec. of the London Union is Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, E.C. We are unable to give you the information you ask as to the others.

A. T. J.—It is in No. 6 of the *Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries*.

The following are thanked for their communications: J. S. (Stockport); F. F. (Whitby); W. S. D. (Eggbaston); W. W. A. (Bala); R. H. (Dulwich); J. F. C. (Leeds); R. C. M. (Ealing); W. T. (Wolverhampton); P. B. (Chatham); D. E. N. (Cromer).

Staccato Notes.

A SOUTH WALES Festival under the conductorship of Sir Joseph Barnby is to be held next summer.

THE well-known harpist, Carl August Oberthür,

died suddenly on the 8th ult. while engaged at a private concert.

MR. A. BRODSKY, principal first violin in the Hallé Orchestra, has been appointed head of the Manchester School of Music.

SIR JOHN STAINER is going to winter in Egypt.

DR. J. F. BRIDGE has been presented with a Doctor of Music's robes by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

THE nett profit of the Leeds Festival was £2,015 4s. 1d.

SURELY the rumour that Mr. Edward Lloyd will shortly retire cannot be true.

A SPLENDID performance of Dr. C. H. H. Parry's "Invocation to Music" (first time in London) was given by the Royal Albert Choral Society on the 21st ult. Madame Albani and Messrs. Ben Davies and A. Black were the soloists. Parts I. and II. of the *Creation* formed the remainder of the programme.

THE Purcell Bi-Centenary Service at Westminster Abbey was a great success.

Accidentals.

"No," said Fogg, "it's no use for me to go to concerts. I went once, and liked it well enough too; but, great guns! when I took up next morning's paper I was flabbergasted. It told of rambles in bosky dells, slumberous musings over the dimpled waters of the gurgling brook, the soothings of summer breezes, the roar and rush of the winter's storm, the merry singing of birds, the frolickings of lambs, the daisy-piled fields, the lovers' soft glances, and—in fact, half a hundred other things that I didn't see or hear when that fellow was fiddling at the concert. It made me so ashamed of myself that all these things were going on right in front of me, and I not know it, that I just made up my mind that concerts weren't in my line."

THE following is told of a stage-struck youth. He was studying the part of Hamlet for an amateur performance; and, as is usual in such cases, everything he said savoured somewhat of the morose Dane. It happened that one morning, during his walks abroad, he came across an excavation, with two or three men digging below; and with the "gravediggers' scene" in his mind's eye, demanded in tragic tones:—

"Whose grave's this, sir?" and paused for reply; but none came. Again he demanded, "Whose grave's this, sir?" But this time a voice that appeared to proceed from the bowels of the earth replied—

"Get out, yer born idiot; we're on'y layin' a gas-pipe!"

AGED HAMLET.—"Yes, sir, I had the proud distinction of playing before Queen Victoria"—

Voice (from next room). — "Oh, the beautiful fibber!"

Hamlet.—"Was married."

Voice (apologetically).—"Excuse me."

"HEAR those musicians playing 'My Grandfather's Clock,'" said Dora, at the window.

"I'd like to know," growled David, "how you can tell they are playing 'My Grandfather's Clock.'"

"They keep such wretched time," explained Dora.

"SHALL I sing something, Mr. Van Braam?" asked Miss Screech, as she swung around on the piano-stool. "Perhaps you had better not," replied the young man; "I read in a newspaper that ear-piercing was no longer stylish."



DEC., 1895.

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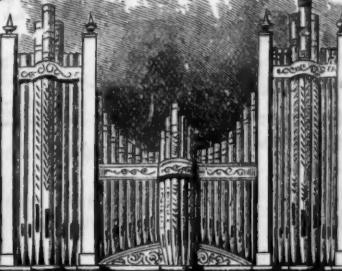
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